

Simple Solutions

Ergonomics for Construction Workers

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NIOSH is a federal government research agency that works to identify the causes of work-related diseases and injuries, evaluate the hazards of new technologies and work practices, and create ways to control these hazards so that workers are protected.

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SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

Table of Contents

Foreword	9
Why This Booklet?	11
Oh, My Aching Body!	13
What Is Ergonomics?	15
Simple Solutions for Floor and Ground-Level Work	
Introduction	19
TIP SHEET #1 Fastening Tools that Reduce Stooping	23
TIP SHEET #2 Motorized Concrete Screeds	25
TIP SHEET #3 Rebar-Tying Tools	27
TIP SHEET #4 Kneeling Creepers	29
TIP SHEET #5 Adjustable Scaffolding for Masonry Work	31
Simple Solutions for Overhead Work	
Introduction	33
TIP SHEET #6 Bit Extension Shafts for Drills and Screw Guns	37
TIP SHEET #7 Extension Poles for Powder-Actuated Tools	39
TIP SHEET #8 Spring-Assisted Drywall Finishing Tools	41
TIP SHEET #9 Pneumatic Drywall Finishing Systems	43
Simple Solutions for Lifting, Holding, and Handling Materials	
Introduction	45
TIP SHEET #10 Lightweight Concrete Block	49
TIP SHEET #11 Pre-Blended Mortar and Grout Bulk Delivery Systems	51
TIP SHEET #12 Skid Plates to Move Concrete-Filled Hoses	53
TIP SHEET #13 Vacuum Lifters for Windows and Sheet Materials	55
Simple Solutions for Hand-Intensive Work	
Introduction	57
TIP SHEET #14 Ergonomic Hand Tools	61
TIP SHEET #15 Easy-Hold Glove for Mud Pans	63
TIP SHEET #16 Power Caulking Guns	65
TIP SHEET #17 Reduced Vibration Power Tools	67
TIP SHEET #18 Power Cleaning and Reaming with a Brush	69
TIP SHEET #19 Snips for Cutting Sheet Metal	71
TIP SHEET #20 Quick-Threading Lock Nuts	73
Glossary	75
References	81

Foreword

Construction is a physically demanding occupation, but a vital part of our nation and the U.S. economy. In 2006, the total annual average number of workers employed in construction rose to an all-time high of nearly 7.7 million, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. This large workforce handled tasks that range from carrying heavy loads to performing repetitive tasks, placing them at risk of serious injury. The physically demanding nature of this work helps to explain why injuries, such as strains, sprains, and work-related musculoskeletal disorders, are so prevalent and are the most common injury resulting in days away from work.

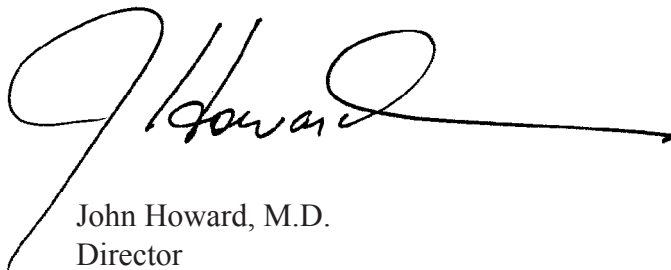
Although the construction industry presents many workplace hazards, there are contractors in the U.S. who are successfully implementing safety and health programs to address these issues, including work-related musculoskeletal disorders.

The safety and health of all workers is a top priority for NIOSH. This booklet is intended to aid in the prevention of common job injuries that can occur in the construction industry.

The solutions in this booklet are practical ideas to help reduce the risk of repetitive stress injury in common construction tasks. While some solutions may need the involvement of the building owner or general contractor, there are also many ideas that individual workers and supervisors can adopt.

There are sections on floor and ground-level work, overhead work, material handling, and hand-intensive work. For each type of work, “simple solutions” for various tasks are described in a series of “Tip Sheets.” The solutions consist mostly of materials or equipment that can be used to do the job in an easier way. Each Tip Sheet describes a problem, one possible solution, its benefits to the worker and employer, how much it costs, and where it can be purchased. All these solutions are readily available and are actually in use today in the U.S. construction industry.

We encourage both contractors and workers to consider the “simple solutions” in this booklet and look for ways you can adapt them to your own job and worksite.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Howard", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Howard, M.D.

Director

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